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## S. R. DRIVER'S "GENESIS."

*Westminster Commentaries. The Book of Genesis, with Introduction and Notes, by Prof. S. R. DRIVER. (Methuen, 1904.)*

THE object of the "Westminster Commentaries" is to provide a series of handbooks to the Bible which should be less elementary than the "Cambridge Bible for Schools," and less exhaustive and critical than the "International Critical Commentaries"; which should appeal to the ordinary theological student, as well as to the more educated layman, and although not so didactic as the "Expositor's Bible," would aim at steadily keeping in view the needs of the preacher. The standpoint of the series, to quote Prof. Lock, the editor, is the combination of "a hearty acceptance of critical principles with loyalty to the Catholic Faith," the critical testing of the books of the Bible "by the ordinary canons of scientific and historical investigation, and a tracing of the clear marks of a higher spirit in its religious tendency."

Every one will agree that there is a very real need at the present day for commentaries written with the above objects; to many people the criticism of the Bible has developed too quickly, and those who have not followed the various stages of its progress find themselves confronted with views apparently irreconcilable with the religious beliefs in which they have been brought up. There are many who ignore the advance of Biblical criticism—from inability to form an independent opinion of their own, from a lurking dread of the extent to which the study might compel them to modify their earlier views, and too often, perhaps, from absolute indifference. There are many, also, who have acquired a passing acquaintance with the results of recent studies, and, confining themselves to "destructive criticism" only, have been unable to adapt their beliefs to the new results, and have rejected the entire teaching of the Old Testament. But it is to those who would keep abreast of the times and who find their reverence for the Bible and their religious faith shaken by modern criticism that this series especially appeals, and unless one is to believe that the critical study of the Old Testament is to be ignored by them, or is to be continued on mildly traditional lines, it should meet a distinct want.

As a matter of fact, the present volume has already reached a second edition, and we may conclude that this is due not only to the confidence which every one has in the author's scholarship, but

also in no small degree to the fact that the aims and objects of the series exactly correspond to the requirements of the bulk of the thinking public. Genesis is pre-eminently the most important book for "higher criticism"; it has exceptional difficulties for those who have been brought up on traditional lines, and it is a matter for congratulation that the commentary should be from the tactful pen of Prof. Driver. It is just because so many problems confront the average reader that a sympathetic, critical, and honest statement of the facts is to be looked for. From its position and literary history the book of Genesis requires a somewhat full treatment, and readers will find that every question of importance is dealt with thoroughly and concisely. Nothing is assumed or taken for granted. The literary problems are introduced, and handled briefly and clearly. Certain problems, such as the cosmogony of Genesis in the light of modern science, are handled with an elaborateness which to some will appear needless. But undoubtedly the ordinary reader has not at his finger-ends the evidence touching the problems of the Creation or Deluge, and we may see in Prof. Driver's commentary the summing up once and for all and the final verdict upon the problems which have for so long perplexed reverent minds.

The lakes, the "bitter lakes," of ink poured out in vain attempts to reconcile science and the Old Testament arose from the failure to understand what the science of the Bible really was. The science of the early chapters of Genesis is the science of a bygone age, its cosmogony, states Prof. Driver, "must be read in the light of the age in which it was written; and while the spiritual teaching so vividly expressed by it can never lose its freshness or value, it must on its material side be interpreted in accordance with the place which it holds in the history of Semitic cosmological speculation" (p. 33).

It is not only science--excavation in Bible lands has thrown a new light upon Genesis. In proportion as the Promised Land shrinks in size when we view it by the side of the mighty empires of Babylonia, Assyria, and Egypt, it gains in dignity of thought and grandeur of religion. Israel's history appears comparatively trifling compared with that of these old-world monarchies, but the sublimity of its teaching and the influence of its literature have played a grander part in the world's history than all the heritage of Egypt and Mesopotamia. A deluge-myth or a creation-legend finds its prototype in Israel's eastern neighbour, but if Israel loses in the point of originality it gains in its ability to adapt and, in adapting, to improve.

Many archaeological questions of the most interesting character

are associated with Genesis, and when one recalls the hasty judgments so often passed it is highly important that the entire evidence should be carefully reconsidered. Thus the bearing of archaeology upon Genesis, chap. xiv especially, receives careful treatment at Prof. Driver's hands, and it may be that many readers will learn with surprise that "*monumental* evidence that the narrative is historical is at present [July, 1903] entirely lacking" (p. 172), and that "obviously, the monuments cannot 'corroborate' the account of an expedition which they do not mention, or even by implication presuppose" (p. 173). To those who have kept abreast with critical studies this statement will cause no surprise, but undoubtedly the warning is necessary in the interests of a large number of students.

All the questions raised by the text are treated with candour and in a critical spirit, yet with characteristic caution. The notes represent all that can be said with certainty, or at least with safety. Mere speculations and many recent theories do not find a place in them. The commentary more properly confines itself to that upon which the great majority of critics are agreed. Such a disputed question, therefore, as the North Arabian Musri is (if I am not mistaken) wholly ignored, and no reference appears to be made to it even in its most moderate form.

The text of the Revised Version forms the basis, and is printed in full. Where necessary, however, preferable renderings are suggested in the notes. Thus, in Gen. xxxii. 28, it is pointed out that "thou hast persevered" is the most probable interpretation of שָׁרִיתָ, and Joseph's coat of many colours" is shown to be strictly a tunic of palms and soles, i. e. reaching to the hands and feet. The difficulties of Gen. xlix. 10 ("until Shiloh come") are reserved for special treatment in an appendix, where, too, the various names of God in Genesis are discussed.

To the Hebrew student who finds Dillmann's admirable work too technical, Prof. Driver's commentary will be always useful; to the theological student it will indeed be indispensable: it is precisely that "adjustment of theology to the new knowledge of the past" (p. xi) which we believe is so earnestly called for at the present day. It does not represent the limit of "higher criticism." Upon many a question the last word has not been said, and many a problem still remains to be solved. No doubt the tide will continue to flow ever onward, sweeping away (it may be) still more long-cherished views, but bringing with it the gift of a better understanding of the Old Testament, and a clearer perception of its origin and growth. One can but dimly guess what the future may have to give us. The assiduous and often thankless labour of the excavator at the *tell* and

of the worker in his study must bring its fruit. Gezer and Taanach have thrown a flood of light upon pre-Israelite cult and civilization, and have opened our eyes to unlooked for possibilities. Of Hebrew life it is true we are at present less informed, and each discovery in this field seems to bring fresh problems. But the conviction is irresistible that although much remains to be done in the less fascinating departments of philological study and of literary and textual criticism, it is from the archaeology of the lands of the Bible that Biblical study will profit most in the future. Unfortunately, in this country at least, this is pre-eminently a subject in which little practical interest is taken.

S. A. Cook.

### IBRÂHÎM IBN JA'KÛB ON LEVITICUS XXIII.

*Das Festgesetz der Samaritaner nach Ibrâhîm ibn Ja'kûb. Edition und Uebersetzung seines Kommentars zu Lev. 23 nebst Einleitung und Anmerkungen von Dr. SIEGMUND HANOVER.* (Berlin, 1904, in 8vo, 74 + xviii pp.)

WHEN Klumel, some little time back, edited for the first time, as an "Inaugurat-Dissertation," a large portion of Ibrâhîm's Samaritan-Arabic Commentary on the Pentateuch (cf. my review in *J. Q. R.*, XVI, pp. 402 seq.), it was easy to foresee that other publications of a similar nature would speedily follow. The publication under review represents a step forward, seeing that the editor has placed before us something which forms a complete work. New conclusions on the festival law were certainly not to be expected. The Samaritan conception of this law is already well known (so far as the general principles are concerned), especially from the researches of Geiger, who had before him also Ibrâhîm's Commentary. Moreover, it is just in the Commentary to Leviticus xxiii that we miss the discussion of the most interesting points, those points on which the Samaritans, like other sects, set themselves in opposition to Rabbinism. I refer to such matters as the explanation of בֵּין הָעֲרָבִים (cf. on this *Revue des Études Juives*, XLV, 176 seq.) and מִמַּחֲרַת הַשַּׁבָּת (cf. *Monatsschrift*, XLI, 206, and *J. Q. R.*, XVI, 407). We equally miss points on which the Samaritans followed their own independent lines, as e.g. the prohibition of all manner of work on festivals (cf. *Revue des Études*